

Latin for Defender of the Forces, the security forces motto is representative of the most visible organization on Eglin right now. These defenders are on point, on post and on call. They aren't taking anything for granted – the firepower is proof. Equipped with an array of resources, they're not just keeping watch – it goes much deeper – they're defending their home turf.

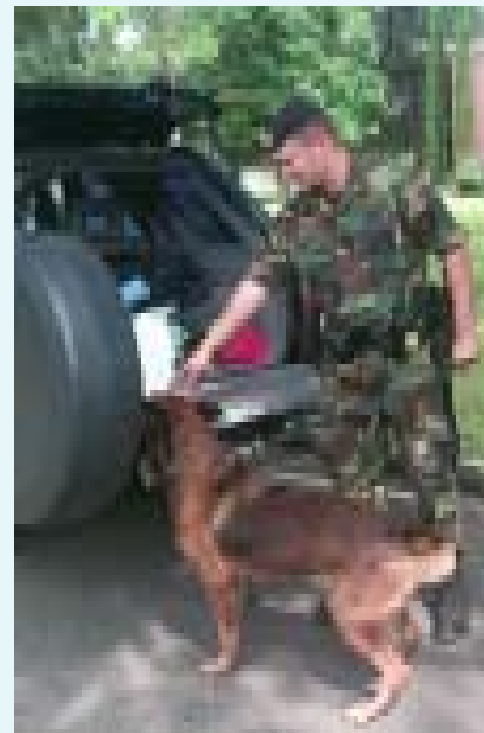
Defensor Fortis

By Senior Airman Kristina Bell
EDITOR

"I never expected anything like this (the terrorist attacks) to happen in the United States," said Senior Master Sgt. John Butler, 96th Security Forces Squadron first sergeant. "Living overseas you expect it, not in the states; but here we are."

Butler's statements were made during a recent tour of the base conducting environmental visits to his airmen who are standing post.

Keeping watch in a Highly Mobile Multi Wheeled Vehicle equipped with substantial amount of firepower, Senior Airman Travis Sailor and Airman 1st Class Courtney West agree with their shirt.



Staff Sgt. Michael Morgan puts Bruno through the drill. Bruno is a seven-year-old German Shephard and can detect a variety of substances.

Photos by Senior Airman Kristina Bell

"It (the response to the attack) didn't hit me until I was assigned to this post," West said. "This isn't an exercise, it's the real thing." West, like most SFS members, has been deployed, and knows base security is important.

Deterrence

To those coming through the gates, seeing the HMMWV tells them it's not an exercise.

"I can see the people who come through the gate look our way," Sailor said. "It isn't everyday they see one of these things. I think it serves as a deterrent to people off base who may think they can pull something."

Working 12-hour shifts can be exhausting, but Sailor said he has a job to do, and protecting the base is the most important thing right now.

"Everyone who's in the military knows there's no such thing as a 12-hour shift," he laughed. "You are on all the time and this is the time when we're needed the most."

First line of defense

If the image doesn't deter someone, the line of



Senior Airman Angela Maddox is an augmentee from the Air Armament Center Contracting Directorate.

security forces members will.

Rotating shifts of augmentees and assigned SFS members check identification and determine who's authorized to be on-base and who should get passes. In the past week, these airmen, who have the most contact with the public, have been the main recipients of encouragement from people coming on base.

"People have been really supportive of us," said Airman 1st Class Sean Williams. "The support throughout the base has been very encouraging. They really appreciate what we're doing."

Staff Sgt. Brian Hillis is thankful for the support he's received from people passing through the gate. "They are concerned about us and they're looking out for us."

Hill is an augmentee from the 16th EWS, now in his third year. He said he enjoys helping

out the security forces and doing something new.

The need to help is what drives Airman 1st Class Christopher Edwards, who is regularly assigned to the 96th Communications Squadron. "I feel like I'm helping out so these guys can get a day off."



Clockwise starting from the left foreground: Airman 1st Class Christopher Edwards, Airman 1st Class Joshua Fisher, Staff Sgt. Brian Hill, Airman 1st Class Phil Sanders, Tech. Sgt. Jay Mathias and Airman 1st Class Sean Williams display a formidable line of defense.



Above: Airman 1st Class Christopher Edwards performs a 100 percent ID check at the West Gate.

Right: Tech. Sgt. Brian Ward checks IDs at the East Gate. Airmen working the gates are requesting everyone to have their identification ready when they come through the gate. If there is no base sticker on the car, people should ensure they have the proper paperwork.

The nose knows

The augmentees may be helping fellow humans have the day off, but for the K-9s, everyday is a work day.

Each gate is equipped with highly-trained dogs, whose bite is worse than their bark and has a nose that keeps them employed.

Bruno, a seven-year-old German Shephard, is one of the most experienced dogs on base. He's been deployed all over the world, including Asia and Africa. Bruno is trained to detect a variety of things, but he'll never say what they are; it's his own little secret. What he would tell you, if he could, is that he knows what he's doing and he's confident no one will slip anything by him. If they try, he has the teeth to make them sorry.

Motivated, dedicated

Base members should feel safe knowing SFS members are on the beat looking out for them. For the men and women of security forces, spirits are high and they have pride in the job they do because people here are depending on them. They know the fast track they're on is important to the base's security. In their homeland, they are the Defenders of the Force.

GETTING THROUGH THE GATE

- Have ID ready, this includes all passengers
- If the car doesn't have a sticker, be sure to have an ID card, a driver's license, insurance and registration for the car
- Follow directions of security forces personnel
- Follow warning, directional and speed limit signs



Airman 1st Class Courtney West (manning the gun) and Senior Airman Travis Sailor stand post at the West Gate in a HMMWV equipped with heavy firepower.

Inset: Airman 1st Class Bumper Kilcup keeps watch over the gate. Airmen keeping watch in the HMMWV say the vehicle is a deterrent to someone who might try to get on base. Those who violate security forces' instructions will be apprehended.

